



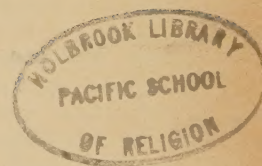
The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JULY 1971

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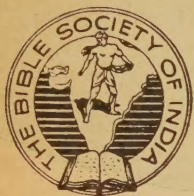
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Rates of subscription per annum : In India Rs. 6. In England 12s. In U.S.A. \$2. Foreign subscription paid in India Rs. 9. Single copy 65 P. (Bank Commission of 65 P. to be added on all mofussil cheques.)

Honorary (and ex-officio) Business Manager : Mrs. D. L. Gopal Ratnam, M.A. All remittances and communications about new subscriptions, discontinuance of subscriptions, advertisements and changes of address should be sent to the Business Manager, *South India Churchman*, Synod Office, Cathedral P.O., Madras 6. Telephone: 811266.

Honorary Agent in the United Kingdom : Miss O. E. Rippengal, B.D., 1 Rochford Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, England.



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I find that several members have still not sent their subscriptions for the current year and I kindly request them to treat this as an individual reminder and see that their subscriptions are sent to me forthwith.

D. L. G. RATNAM,
Business Manager.

Christian Youth in Conference

Older people who take part in the meetings arranged for youth or in functions in the institutions or organizations for the young generally say that such an experience is exhilarating and that it makes them feel young. But, today, where Christian youth groups are concerned, such an experience can be very depressing.

In the first place, one gets a feeling that there is something highly irrelevant about such gatherings. If they are of the pietistic type, the irrelevance is that of ignoring the realities of the environment and of not being aware that the gospel is concerned with their own selves in relation to just those realities. But if the gatherings are those at which youth are brought together to be helped to grasp the all-inclusive nature of the gospel, they feel that it is altogether irrelevant or only marginal to basic Christian concerns which, according to them, are 'spiritual' as distinguished from the 'secular'. Whichever type of irrelevance it may be, it is most unfortunate, and Christian youth, who ought to make great strides at such assemblies do not even get properly oriented, that is set in the direction along which they should explore their responsibilities as Christians.

Passivity is the deplorably dominant attitude of youth at Christian youth assemblies in India. While we read of the demands of youthful delegates at WCC or other general Church Assemblies that they must be given substantial representation, the gatherings of the Youth themselves are sterile in terms of creative thought and action, or they are just pale imitations of the general assemblies in the exercise of making general comments. While a few individual young men and women have followed the hard line of commitment and significant action in the past, it is a matter for concern that Christian youth organisations in the present in India do not generate any movements, even on a small scale, for determined Christian action within the Church or outside.

At Youth assemblies it is certainly necessary that there should be a presentation of both the realities of the world and the implications of exercising Christian discipleship in the midst of them. But these should form the background against which youth must do their own thinking or make their own decisions. At this point, however, the leadership—the younger sort even more than the older—does not leave the youth alone to ponder over the presentations and their relevance to their own Christian responsibilities, but hustles them into the passing of resolutions and records of findings which, if they were genuine declarations of the assembled youth, must be marvels of sustained and creative thinking within an incredibly short time. Group discussions, at which this astonishing illumination is supposed to have taken place, are usually places where there certainly is expression of individual opinion, but hardly anything of the process of thinking together. What comes out as a report in the end is either a rudimentary piece of thinking of doubtful Christian validity or a pretentious proclamation of 'Christian' opinion based on the speeches of experts or the driving energy of a leader of the group.

The predicament of our more ambitious conferences and assemblies for university students or educated youth may be illustrated by an incident which happened towards the end of an SCM Camp some time ago. One of the leaders of the SCM present had called for comments on the Conference at a plenary session. A girl with fundamentalistic leanings, who had been persuaded to attend the Camp by a lecturer, got up and said that the camp had not been profitable to her in any way. And then there was a long silence—till the Chairman of the Area tried to reassure the audience that,



while that might have been the experience of one of them, surely there must be many others who would have benefited by some part or other of the programme. When the Chairman was recounting this incident later to friends and speaking of the tactlessness of the SCM leader they pointed out to him that the really regrettable aspect of it was that no other participant at the Camp had come forward to say that he had a different experience and to give an account of what he had gained from attending the camp.

There are, of course, evaluation sessions in some of the more sophisticated conferences where participants are invited to talk about, or to write out, their impressions of them or to comment on different aspects of them. But all this is still making the Conferences ends in themselves and putting much more emphasis upon what happens in them than on what happens afterwards. Here again, it may be claimed that there are quite a few ways in which conferences are followed up such as facilities for keeping in touch with the leaders or organisers and letters written by the participants to themselves which would be opened only six months later. But what does all this add up to in our experiences of conferences and of what comes out of them? In the type of conferences where the organisers are determined that 'something must happen' there are a number of 'decisions for Christ'. But unfortunately the price that is often paid for such decisions under pressure is the closing of the mind and the surrender of that very freedom of mind and spirit that Christ came to give mankind. In the other type of conferences where openness of mind and a continuing exploration of the implications of discipleship are encouraged the participants get rather bewildered about the world issues that are presented to them and do not see the point at which these issues touch their lives and their Christian faith or at which their Christian faith can do anything about them. Hence even if they appear to grasp such issues and to see the relevance of Christianity to them, they go back and forget all about them or resign themselves to a feeling of helplessness about them, because they have not been helped to see what they can do about them when they go back. Hence the reports and resolutions of the Conferences read like a blueprint for the reformation and reordering of the world with no indication of what any group of participants can do or how they will begin to 'rise up and build'.

All this is not to say that the big issues of the world or of the nation should not be highlighted at youth Conferences. On the contrary it is very necessary to do so, because only against such a background can the young people understand the world they live in and see the problems of their own immediate environment in proper perspective. But world issues are so big and often so technical that even the ablest Christians can do little about them as such. If Christians should be able to do anything about them they should learn to accept responsibility for, and grapple with, the local manifestations—or incidence in miniature—of

world problems. Autocratic exercise of power, rivalries and jealousies, corruption of the means for securing education, justice, health and decency of life are common to all levels of civic life from the Panchayats to the UNO. It is in the local struggles for genuine human existence and for a clean and socially well-ordered village or town that Conferences for Christian young people should inspire and enable them to play their part. And it is just here that Conferences seem to fail them.

A Conference is a brief affair. It is also the gathering together of people from different backgrounds of social and domestic life—urban, rural, industrial, agricultural, highly educated, illiterate, etc. So, one can understand the difficulties in the way of its addressing itself to the particular environments and local situations of the individual participants. These difficulties would not be so great as they are now, however, if only the youth organizations in each diocese were oriented towards helping young men and women prepare and train themselves for 'engagement with the world'. On the contrary these organizations, as a rule, have the effect of isolating and even insulating them against such a contact with the world. Actually, some dioceses have been willing to hand over responsibility for youth work to organizations outside the dioceses and the CSI which encourage such aloofness from the world, because those organizations were able to bring in money and appoint and pay their own workers. It is also generally true that the authorities of these dioceses have not seen anything wrong or lacking in the teaching of these organizations.

There is a great need for the leadership of the CSI and other Churches in India seriously to concern themselves with the teaching and training of youth. The sort of autonomy that now prevails in the dioceses of the CSI is, in practice, the freedom to shut out the insights that God is giving to His Church these days and to become turned in upon themselves and engrossed in their own internal affairs. It is not the freedom to strike out on their own in exploring their 'servant' mission. Un-

fortunately, the Synod of the CSI seems to be content to wait for the dioceses to turn to the light whenever that might be. There should be no question, of course, of the Synod imposing a certain teaching or pattern of youth work or any other kind of work on the dioceses. But are these the only alternatives? Should not the Synod make provision not merely for effective communication with dioceses, but also for a sustained impact on their programmes so that all the dioceses together may pursue activities more proper to the Church than those relating to self-perpetuation and routine exercises of the pietistic type? A great amount of time and money is being spent in every diocese on work for youth, women and children. But very little of it is really conducive to the formation of what has come to be called 'the new style of Christian living'. As a first step towards reorientation of these activities in the dioceses the Synod might appoint a small commission to go round the dioceses—at least a few which might serve as samples—to make an evaluation of, and recommendations for, specific activities.

In this Number we print reports, findings and papers of the National Christian Youth Assembly held in Madras two months ago. There was a great exhortation to the Youth for *openness*—to the future, to men of other religions and to the realities of politics, economics and the world in general. Among the papers, unfortunately, there is not much that either touches upon the immediate and local environment of any group of Youth or any record of discussion of findings in relation to it. It is possible, however, that group discussions dealt with it. But even if the Youth have been given guidance in thinking about what ought to be their immediate concerns, what opportunity and freedom and encouragement will they get to turn it to good account in the activities of the local groups and organizations to which they return? Readers of the *Churchman* would, I am sure, be thankful for any reports from such groups about how the message of the Assembly is being taken up by them.

National Christian Youth Assembly from April 30 to May 5, 1971, at Bain's School, Madras

H. PRITHVIRAJ, *Student, Madras Christian College*

We thank God for the wonderful opportunity that he gave to the Youth of the Church of South India in Madras to shoulder the responsibility of organising the National Youth Assembly. This Assembly ought to have taken place in Delhi last December. All preparations were made and yet, owing to certain organisational errors and a deficit budget, the very idea of holding the Assembly in Delhi was abandoned. However, the venue was shifted to Madras and the Assembly became a reality in Madras. This was a great contribution of the Church of South India to the Christian young people in India. The theme of the Assembly, LET US RISE UP AND BUILD, sounded all over India within a short time and it came to sound less like a theme and slogan and much more like a terrible quickening reality that laid hold of young people demanding that it should be lived out.

The Planning Committee in Madras started working day and night. In the last week of April, young people started arriving in Madras from all over India. Delegates from Andaman and Nicobar Islands were the first to arrive. The Reception Committee did a marvellous job in arranging

comfortable journeys both ways for so many delegates and the service rendered at Railway Stations and Airport in Madras was most praiseworthy. Madras Diocesan Youth Secretaries and volunteers were up at all hours receiving delegates at the terminals.

Inaugural Function

On April 30th, after registration and tea, the inaugural plenary session was held in the spacious Bain's Hall. A choir of 50 young people in white led the singing. After a brief worship service, Mr. Robert Cunville, NCC Youth Secretary, introduced the leaders to the Assembly. Mr. Ajit Seymour, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, welcomed the gathering. The very presence of Dr. Mary Verghese of C.M.C., Vellore, who delivered a short and gripping inaugural address, the thought-provoking key-note address by the Rt. Rev. Ananda Rao Samuel, and the challenging call to the delegates by Mr. Victor Pandian, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Planning Committee, made a great impact on the participants.

The inaugural session was followed by the 'Unjust

City', a dramatic presentation of the Assembly theme, specially written by Miss Joyce Peel for the occasion. Many of us at the Assembly felt that the message of the theme was very powerfully brought out on the first evening itself through the carefully planned inaugural function and the 'Unjust City'. After the play, the delegates and leaders of the Christian Community in Madras were invited for an open-air buffet dinner in the tastefully decorated and colourfully illuminated Bain's School Square. When the delegates appeared in their regional costumes, the colourful atmosphere and rich tones of their dress lent almost a carnival atmosphere to the sense of community.

Worship

The daily programme began with worship at 8.30 a.m. On May Day, worship began with singing and prayer and then, to the great surprise of the delegates, 'Jesus and His disciples' entered the hall and led the delegates outside, and, under a tree, 'Jesus' encountered His disciples on the very relevant points of today: 'False Prophecy', 'False Disciples', 'Kingdom to come' and 'Go ye into the World'. The whole scene was like a dream and the delegates were thrilled. Such was the way the Planning Committee of the Assembly looked into every minute detail of the programme and made the whole Assembly a purposeful and meaningful gathering to all the participants. The rest of the days the worship was brief, sometimes unconventional, always stirring up praise, meditation, confession, challenge and commitment. After the worship, there was a 'Learn to Sing' programme. The platform was left open to the delegates who could come forward to teach new Choruses and Hymns.

Bible Study

The most important programme of the Assembly was the Bible Study conducted by Bishop Newbigin on the theme 'LET US RISE UP AND BUILD' and, following the Bible Studies, the delegates had the option to put questions to the leader and clear their doubts. Bishop Newbigin by his clear thinking on the theme helped everyone to come to grips with the spirit of the theme. His talks revealed to the youth how the Bible is relevant to the space age. He also made it clear that God is actually asking us to be builders with Him, to be creators with Him and to work with Him in finishing what He began to do when He created all things anew in Jesus Christ. The world has a real future which goes far beyond our imagination but which is assured for us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of the vast explosion of the creative power. This becomes a starting point of a vast movement of recreation which looks forward, not only to the transformation of our own personalities from within, but also through that to the transformation of all things in which we become participants. Bishop Newbigin's Bible Study was educative, challenging and appropriate. After the Bible Study hour there were 13 groups spending two hours daily studying the word of God.

Commissions

There had been much planning of the programme, but it was flexible enough to allow plenty of room for personal and group manoeuvring within the theme and the topics pursued in the seven commissions:

1. Youth and Rural Development
2. Youth and Urban Development
3. Role of the University in changing India.
4. Development through Service Projects.
5. Progressive Youth in the Servant Church.
6. Development through Arts and Communications.
7. Youth and Political Ideology.

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The Commissions met for two hours in the afternoon. The leadership team of each Commission had autonomy to work in terms of their own convictions. There was a Convener in charge of each Commission. For each Commission there was a Sub-Committee and resource persons were also appointed for each Commission. The Commissions ended their work on the third day by finalising their findings and recommendations which were submitted at the plenary sessions on the afternoon of the closing day.

Evening Programmes

After tea, games and competitions were arranged. This helped to build the love and fellowship of all and to enhance the sense of belonging together in this task of rising up and building. The brotherly love and concern for each other and the mutual understanding and fellowship which prevailed in the huge gathering were remarkable.

Cultural Programme

On the opening day, the Christian Arts and Communication Choir gave a concert after dinner. On May 1st it was 'Madras Night'. Madras Youth were at their best in presenting classical dances, folk music, folk dances, beat-session, skits, musical instruments, Negro Spirituals, etc. The whole programme represented the cross section of the Youth of the cosmopolitan city of Madras. On the third evening, we had the 'Delegates Night' which went on for three hours. Programmes from Assam, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala were very well appreciated by the large gathering of visitors and the delegates. On the closing day, after the hard work and the hectic activities came to an end, the delegates sat around the camp fire and relaxed. There were folk dances, magic, acrobatics, music, fun and laughter. The programme went up to midnight.

Communion Service

On Sunday, May 2, at 6.30 a.m., all delegates assembled at the Bain's Hall for Holy Communion Service. The seats were arranged in an oval shape. In the centre of the hall was a long table and 50 delegates at a time stood around the table to receive the bread and wine. Bishop Newbigin, assisted by the youngest presbyters in the city, celebrated the communion. It was a moving and solemn occasion. The service was very simple, unconventional, meaningful and touching.

Main Speakers

We had plenary addresses by main speakers daily from 6 to 7 p.m.

- May 1. Mr. Somen Das—'The Church in Modern India'.
- May 2. Mr. C. T. Kurien—'Let my Country Awake'.
- May 3. The Rt. Rev. I. R. H. Gnanadasan—'Christian Presence in Social Change'.
- May 4. The Rt. Rev. I. R. H. Gnanadasan—'Revolutionary Gospel'.

The morning Bible Study and the evening main addresses blended very well and held together the whole thinking of the Assembly. The main speakers replied to several questions raised by the delegates after their addresses. On one occasion the question time was extended to one hour. This clearly shows that the participants were not merely listeners and that there was real participation at all levels.

Hosts Party

Hats off to the Madras Planning Committee for their novel idea of sending 270 delegates to 112 homes for dinner on the evening of 2nd May. The hosts, from different walks of life in the city of Madras, picked up the delegates and

leaders in their cars for dinner. All the delegates were brought back by 10.30 p.m. Everyone enjoyed this grand outing. The Planning Committee must have worked hard to find out such a large number of hosts. Everybody's heart was full of joy as they returned to Bain's School after 'Hosts Party'.

The programme of the Assembly went on one after another as if a film was moving on the screen. This was a real Youth Assembly in every sense because everyone felt that he had a share in shaping the Assembly. Except for the main speakers and resource persons at the seven commissions, there was no influence of older people. All the plenary sessions were presided over by young people. This was

the first Assembly where Catholic young people participated in the Conference as full members, and they also served as leaders in Bible Study groups and the Commissions. There were plenary Chairmen and resource persons from the Catholic Church. In every sense the Assembly was a real ecumenical gathering.

The Assembly was a memorable one. When I sit quietly and look back for a while on the few days when the Christian young people assembled in Bain's School, the memory of those days simply thrills me. No doubt the impact on the delegates was great. I must say that I have learnt much and the Assembly was an eye-opener to me and to several delegates.

Inaugural Address at the Youth Assembly

MARY VARGHESE,* *Vellore*

I consider it a great privilege and honour to have been invited to come and inaugurate this Assembly. To meet the Christian Youth of India who have come to respond to the call, 'Let us rise up and build', is a thrilling experience. Nehemiah, the classic in the Bible on the subject of personal service for God, is chosen as the theme of this Assembly. During the coming four days you are going to think, to meditate and to receive help from the addresses and group discussions on what it means, and how you can equip yourselves, 'to rise up and build'.

I may mention one or two points as an introduction to understand how Nehemiah was used by God to build the walls of the Holy City. Nehemiah did not rush to Jerusalem on hearing from his brother that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the remnant of His people in the Holy City were in great affliction. You cannot just slip into Christian work as a kind of hobby. You will fail terribly if you do. Nehemiah had an encounter with God. He wept, mourned, fasted and prayed. He was conscious of his own sins and the sins of his people. He was conscious of his and his peoples' inadequacy, insufficiency and unworthiness for the task. But he believed in God's promises and his prayers were based on God's past dealings. Following that prayer which reassured him of God's intention and God's purpose he went out in the power of God and set about the task. Having received the assurance from God, Nehemiah was determined to do his work, to meet the enemies and to face the difficulties because he believed that the God of Heaven would prosper him. Before we start any service for God,

we should mourn over failures to live lives which reflect Jesus Christ. Are we burdened like Nehemiah about the ruins of the walls of our Church testimony and our personal testimony? If we are burdened like Nehemiah, let us go on our knees trusting in God's promises. We are indeed more privileged than Nehemiah because we have not only the promises, we have the supreme revelation of God's immeasurable love in the life and redemptive work of Christ.

The second point I want to bring to your notice is the need for co-operation and fellowship in Christian service. Having understood the magnitude of the problem Nehemiah realised the need for co-operation, the necessity of getting co-workers with him. Nehemiah told the people to see the distress—Jerusalem lieth waste, her gates are burned with fire. He called them to work with him to build the walls of the Holy City so that they might be no more a reproach to God. When Nehemiah told them that the hand of God which had come upon him was good, he received the response from his co-workers: 'Let us rise up and build'. You, young Christian leaders, as you go to your place of Christian service, burdened with the inadequacy of our Christian witness and service, it is my earnest prayer that during this Assembly you may have a fresh encounter with God to hear your call for service and then that the service becomes a spontaneous outcome of our love for God and our brethren in distress. You will also learn to get the co-operation and fellowship of the Christians in your own place and community who will say, 'Let us rise up and build'.

* Dr. Mary Varghese is Head of the Department of the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore.—Ed.

'Let Us Rise Up and Build'

The theme of our Assembly is 'Let us rise up and build', and that theme implies two things. It implies that we are thinking about the future and it implies that we have some part to play in the future. Now let us face the fact that, that goes against a great deal of traditional religious thinking. Most religious thinking is concerned with the past. Most people when they think of God as the eternal, unchangeable, final reality, immediately think of something in the past, something which has been told out of the past. And most people when they become religious are inclined to say that we cannot do very much about the future because it is in God's hands. You take, for example, the whole idea of creation. Most Christian people misunderstand what the Bible says about creation. They take the first two chapters of Genesis and they take it for granted that we believe that God is the Creator because it is written in the first two chapters of Genesis that such and such happened, but that is not true. We believe that God is the Creator because Jesus Christ rose from the dead and because Jesus Christ rose from the dead we can understand what creation means. Let me give a very simple illustration. Several centuries ago, Prince Philip II of Spain had a good idea to deepen two of the rivers in Spain so that the ships could navigate them and so that the isolated villages in the upper reaches of the river could not be cut off from the rest of the world. He appointed the Royal Commission to investigate the possibility of deepening these rivers. After much consultation the Commission replied as follows: 'Your Majesty, if God had intended these two rivers to be navigated He would have made them deep enough when he created the world.' Well what about it? Test that against your idea of creation. Did God finish the creation when He did it, or did He leave it to us to finish it? If you laugh at that Royal Commission then you must answer that question. Do you believe that God simply finished the creation and it is all finished and that we have nothing more to do; or do you not believe that? Please test your own thinking. You laugh because I was talking about a technical question and when you think about technical questions you think one way. But if I had started by talking about the first chapter of Genesis then you would have been thinking in a different way. You would have said God finished the world and it was all finished. Last year when we had a very bad famine in this part of India, our Diocese undertook a programme for deepening 2,500 irrigation wells—a very big programme. Some people came to us and said, 'Do you believe in God or not.' 'Yes, we believe in God.' 'Do you pray for rain?' 'Yes, we pray for rain.' 'Do you expect God to answer your prayers?' 'Yes, we expect God to answer our prayers.' 'Then why are you deepening 2,500 wells?' Or again there are many people here in Madras who say that if you are ill then you should simply pray to be better and that if you use medicine then you do not believe in God. Many Christians who say that now do not apply it to their children. If the children are hungry and say, 'Mummy, give me something to eat', they do not say, 'If you pray you will get something to eat and I don't need to give you anything.' We are very illogical, but my point is this—most of our religious thinking is wrong, even as Christians, because we are thinking all the time of the past and what is finished and because we are not doing justice to what the Bible teaches us about the future, about the open future, about the future in which God is still calling us to co-operate. The Bible teaches us about the future which is

open and in which God is inviting us to co-operate with Him in finishing the work He began in the creation. Now, of course, there is also truth on the other side. We may have to come back to that. But I want to take, today, one passage of the Bible, which we know very well and think about it with you with this point in mind. Please look at Exodus, Chapter 2. This is the great scene between Moses and God in the desert. You remember that Moses had killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite and then he had to flee and settle down in the desert. (Exodus 2: 23—Ex. 3: 1-17).

There is a people enslaved. They have been too much crushed in spirit to think of revolution. They are the victims of ruthless exploitations—like the poor of our own country who are treated with contempt and who accept it because they have been too much crushed in spirit by centuries of contempt. Oh yes, they still have their religion. But then religion is an affair of the past—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the old religion that our fathers and grandmothers talked to us. And there is this man Moses. Moses by blood belongs to the enslaved people, but by culture, by education, he belongs to the ruling class. In his blood he belongs to these slaves, but, with his head, with his culture, with his education, he is I.A.S., 1st class, gold medal. He has had the finest education that the age could give. In other words, he is the kind of person out of whom a revolutionary is made. He had made one futile revolutionary gesture. He had seen one of the ruling class beating one of his own people and in a blaze of anger he had killed and then he had had to flee the country. It was the kind of futile violence that accomplishes nothing. He had to escape and hide in a foreign country. He got married, he settled down, he became a member of the established society, a shepherd looking after the flock of the family. And then a day came—he is alone in the desert in the vast solitude of the desert, where the hubbub of Egypt is far, far away, but he is aware of a disturbing presence and a power. A fire is blazing in the desert and it is the fire in the heart of God Himself, a God whom Moses knows with the roots of his being and whose anger burns at man's brutality to man; a fire which will never go out until God has burnt up all man's cruelty, greed and lust; a fire in the heart of God. But who is God? What does this word 'God' mean? Does it mean anything? Is it just a word out of the past? What do we mean when we say 'God'? What are we talking about? Well, immediately the first answer is 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob'; the God of our fathers; the God we learned about when we were children; the God who is talked about in the ancient books, in ancient liturgy and in ancient practices of the church, which is itself an ancient body, full of the past. 'All right, God that may be, who you are I wouldn't know, but who am I? Who am I? What do you mean by saying that I shall go down to Egypt and liberate my people? I am nobody. I am just one in a huge crowd. Anyway I tried once and made a mess of it and you know that. Who do you think I am? How do you think I can be responsible for starting a revolution?' The answer to that question is, 'I will be with you and you will know that I am with you when your revolution has succeeded and you have laid the foundations of a new society here in this place. Till then you will just have to accept my word for it that I am with you.' 'All right, Lord, I will take your word for it,

but who are you by the way? Not much use my knowing that you are with me if I did not know who you are. If I go and ask the people in Egypt to start a revolution in your name, they will ask, 'What is His name?' 'Who is it that you are talking about? Who is the God in whose name you want us to start a revolution? Is it the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob? If so, then he belongs to the old order, he belongs to the establishment. He is part of the past, he is very much the status symbol.' How do I describe you, Lord, if they ask me? You did say that you were the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob. Is that all just old time religion? Of course we can have religious revival, Lord, down there in Egypt, but you know that religious revival does not make a revolution, it only consolidates the *status quo*. 'What am I to say, Lord, when they say who is this God?' 'All right, Moses, I will give you an answer to your question. If they ask you who sent you, say, "I will be" sent you—I will be who I will be.' 'I will be'. That is the name of God. Moses went on arguing for a long time before he finally accepted. He who thought himself a hopeless failure was to go back to the place where he had failed and challenge the power of a mighty empire, simply trusting in the promise of one whom he had not seen and could not name, who could not be pointed to or described or identified but was simply a promise, 'I will be with you, I will be what I will be.' Moses will only understand who it is that makes his promise when he goes forward trusting in that promise, and Moses will only understand who he himself is when he goes forward trusting in that promise. The only clue to understanding my own identity is in the future of God, the God who is always going on before. Now that is the beginning of the adventure of salvation and the point is that it is an open-ended future. Moses does not have a blueprint for the future. Along the way people have often thought that they had a blueprint for the future. They were sure that they knew exactly what God's future was. They had it all tied up. At one stage it was simply that the people of Israel should occupy the land of Canaan. Then at a later stage it was that the scattered peoples of Judah should be re-assembled in Mount Zion. Then it was that the reign of the Lord should be established and that the foreign empire should be driven out of Palestine. And so on and on down through history people have thought that in the name of God they could state what the future was to be, until our own times when the multitudes of Christians have thought that God's plan for the future was to keep the world safe from Karl Marx. One after another we have had these ideologies of the future which God intends to be opened is closed and people are classified according to whether they are in or out of that ideology. Perhaps the very latest ideology is secularisation and we may begin to discover that that also has to be broken open and that

we have to see an open future. The point is that over and over again God breaks open these ideologies, breaks open the future, His future, God's future and therefore our future with God. Because we only have a future with God. I say 'over and over again', but of course there is only one decisive turning point in that story and that is the cross and resurrection of Jesus. The cross was a place where the decisive encounter took place between the living God, the God of the future, the God of resurrection, the living God, and the ultimate ideologies of law and religion and politics. If you look at the forces that were ranged against Jesus, you will see that they represent, in a kind of quint-essential form, these basic ideologies of law, ethics, morals, religion, piety, politics, law and order, the establishment. These were the forces which met the living God in Jesus Christ, destroyed Him and by that were themselves not destroyed but unmasked, exposed, relativised, dethroned as Paul says in his letter to the Colossians. By the cross all these ideologies were not destroyed, they still exist. But they were dethroned; they no longer have any absolute authority. There is an open future which begins from the open grave of Jesus Christ. There is a future with God, with the living God Jesus Christ, a future in which we have an essential part, a future which God does not wish to have without us. I simply want to leave you with this point and I think it is very, very vital that the Bible gives us the word of a living God who is always out ahead of us, in the future. Yes, He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God whom our fathers and mothers told us about. He is the God of whom we know through His mighty works in the past. It would be wrong to pretend otherwise. We begin there. We begin with that which is taught to us in the past. We have no other place to begin. But we do not stop there. The living God reveals Himself to us in this precise, concrete situation, where a people is exploited, where there is an intolerable political situation, where there is intolerable social injustice, where there is something which blasphemes God by its brutality. In this concrete situation God makes Himself known to us as a burning fire. If we ask, 'who am I to do anything about this? What am I—just one person?' He answers, 'I will be with you.' That is your future. If you ask, 'but who are you?' the answer is still, 'I will be what I will be. You come and see who I am. I can't tell you in advance. You will have to come and see. But you will have to go on with me and then you will discover who I am.' It is that kind of open future that God is offering to us and therefore this word of our conference **LET US RISE UP AND BUILD**, is not an empty word. God is actually asking us to be builders with him, to be creators with Him, to work with Him in finishing what He began to do when He had created all things in Jesus Christ.

Christian Concern in Society and Politics in India To-day

G. R. KARAT,* Bangalore

Why Worry ?

The social revolutions of our times are an area that deserves the first and best attention of Christians today. It is so, not because everybody talks of revolution, and we would be behind the times if we too did not join in the general din. It is so primarily because through renewed Bible study, and through fresh Christian thought and meditation, the Holy Spirit has been leading us to new, more comprehensive and more challenging answers to questions like—What is God's intent and work for the Salvation of the world in Jesus Christ? How do we understand the continuing work of Christ in the life of the world? What does it mean for the Church to be fellow-worker with God in this work? Let me say a little more to make clear the kind of Christian insights that are compelling us to take our social and political responsibilities seriously.

Too Small a God :

We now see that God's Good News for men in Jesus Christ has really to do with the *Salvation* of the world (gathering it to Himself in Christ) and not with *salvaging* it, or segments of the world called 'Christians' or 'the Church'. When we limited the work of Christ to something called 'spiritual', when we reduced it to the salvation of Christians and the Church, when we understood it to demand our dissociation from the hopes, aspirations and fears of men, the struggles and tribulations of the world outside the walls of the Church, we made God, the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer of the world—the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . . not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might have life—we made Him almost a tribal God. We limited his power over the lives of men to the 'spiritual' part of it; limited his power over the world to Christians and the Church. We made him so limited in his power over history that he seemed to demand that his people abandon it to the destruction that is to come.

Towards a new Perspective :

This understanding of Christian Salvation probably gave us a sense of being specially privileged people, but no one can seriously accept that this was a worthy concept of God. Please do not misunderstand me—I do believe that there is a personal confrontation with Jesus and a commitment to Him in the life of every Christian; I do believe in the Holy Catholic church; I do believe that one kind of 'love of the world' is enmity with God. But I also believe that the fullness of the Gospel is that commitment to Christ means also commitment to our fellow-men; I believe that the Church's primary job is to be a suffering servant in the service of the world even as her Master was, and not to scorn the world in order to keep herself safe for the next world. I believe that we cannot love God unless we share his love for the world—a love that cares for its well-being, a love that sees in the world the potentialities for the glory of God, a love that is ready and willing to make common cause with the world as it blunderingly gropes and struggles to be what God wants it to be, viz., a humanity made new in Jesus. This is the fuller truth to which God has opened the eyes of the Church in our times.

Most certainly, those who have accepted Jesus, as well as the Church that has accepted Jesus, are enabled to make a

unique contribution to the fulfilling of the will of God in and for the world. In fact, this is the only reason why it is important for men to be Christians. However, it would be a mistake to go further from this, and to say that God is limited to working only in and through Christians. He is Lord, not only of the Church, but also of the World; and He has other resources than the Church to command for accomplishing His purposes. His purposes in Christ are sure, and they are being worked out in diverse ways, through all sorts of men and events, because the basic longings of men for truth, justice, freedom and peace are His gifts to *all* men, and they are witnesses to His love for *all* men. The Risen and living Christ has never ceased to be abroad and active in the events of history. The Church that recognises Him there, and becomes partners with Him, finds its salvation. The Church that does not, is abandoned and cast out even as the first Israel was passed over when it would not live for God's purposes for the nations of the world.

Salvation of Man in Community :

Therefore, it is of the greatest importance that we have a fully biblical understanding of Salvation as something not merely for individuals but as meant for the whole created world. No man is an island; man becomes man in relationship, in communities, societies and nations. Even the Christian virtues are meaningful, and can be practised, only in these relationships, e.g., there is nowhere else one can be loving, kind, truthful, honest or just and respect the worth of man and his freedom except in relationships with people. The way these relationships are *organised* determine the extent to which these are possible in life. If you think of casteism, racism, feudalism, regionalism, linguism, denominationalism, democracy, dictatorship, communism, capitalism, etc., you will see how some of these are more conducive, and some inimical, to one or more of these values which we all accept as being necessary for a truly human life. If the son of God became the son of man in order that the sons of men might become the sons of God, then a salvation that does not save, redeem, transform the multiple relationships, and structures of relationship, that shape men's lives is, at best, an incomplete salvation. St. Paul had this insight when he spoke of God having reconciled to him all things through Christ (Col. 1:19-20). Once we begin to see the truth of this, there is no more need for conflict between the material and the spiritual, between the salvation of individuals and the salvation of society, between conversion and a concern and sense of responsibility for the historical processes of our time. For a truly Christian and Scriptural understanding of the relation between the Gospel and the world, between the Christian and the society of which He is a part, we need to balance the detachment of our Lord's saying 'My Kingdom is not of this world' with the hope and promise of the Gospel which is that 'the Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ'.

Not Ritual but Righteousness :

When we talk of Christian concerns in society and politics we are talking about the need to change systems and structures of societies, and of nations, that have become the enemies of the truly human life that God has willed for

mankind in Jesus—because they deny freedom and justice and equality to masses of the people. In so much of our society, the freedom of the few is used to enslave the many; the power of the few is used to exploit the many; the rights of the few are used to deprive the rights of the many. The prophets of the O.T. teach us unambiguously that no amount of religious worship and observance, or pride in being God's people, makes people who allow these things in their midst acceptable in God's sight (Is. 1:12-17; Amos 2:6-8; 4:1-2; 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). Our Lord's teaching is no less clear (Matt. 23:34-40; Not everyone who says Lord, Lord . . .) So, 'our concern for the oppressed is not an act of Kindness on the part of a superior to an inferior. We are concerned about the poor, because God is concerned about the exploited in society; . . . (we are concerned) about justice and steadfast love because God in his relationship to man has shown himself to be a God of social justice, right dealings and steadfast love.'

It is a great pity that in our understanding of salvation and of the message of the Gospel we have tended to over-emphasise the fact of personal sin but shown little understanding of our corporate sin in the societies and in man-made systems. It is because of this we must humbly acknowledge that it is to forces very largely outside the Church that credit must be given for making the question of freedom, social justice and equality the chief question of our times everywhere; e.g. Trade Unions, Communism, overthrow of colonialism, science and technology, awakened masses, Secularisation. At the root of these great upheavals of our time is a new-found awareness of, and demand for, personal dignity by masses of people who till now were suppressed and submerged. In their struggles for social justice and freedom and equality they are seeking to fill this awareness of dignity with substance. They want to be free to shape their world, to meet their needs, and to have a full and rightful share of the good things that science and technology have made available. However, we must beware of over-romanticising the unrest of our times, for, mixed up with it there are demonic elements which are capable of bringing even greater, or at least newer, evils than they seek to remove.

Our Revolutionary Constitution :

Let us now think of some things nearer home, here in India, of at least a few specific areas where we as Christians, and especially as young people, can make common cause with the struggles of our time for a humane society in our land. The first thing for us to do is to recognise that we live in a country that is committed to radical social change. The source and the sanction of this is not communism but our own Constitution. 'In its Directive Principles of State policy, it has laid down a charter of radical change of structure to enable India to move along the line of rapid modernisation of its traditional society and of greater social justice for the mass of people.' Therefore, 'the Constitution of India is a revolutionary document if we take its objectives seriously. Attainment of these objectives calls for fundamental changes in political, economic and social relationships. In effect it requires a replacement of existing values and institutions by new ones. Here indeed is the strange phenomenon of legalising revolutionary tendencies'. When we try to be even more specific, we see the need for the present politics of self-aggrandisement to be changed into politics of Service; the economics of exploitation to change into the economics of sharing, the status-conscious society to become an egalitarian society. If youth, and especially Christians, have nothing to contribute to some of these goals it is a very damning situation indeed.

Tasks and Challenges for Youth

The following are some of the areas where the hope for social change lies mainly with young people, not necessarily because they are better or wiser people, but because they can be reasonably expected to desire change, to be willing to change, to take risks in the cause of great ideals.

(1) We all deplore the sorry state of politics, and hold unprincipled and self-seeking politicians to be responsible for this. But does the style of student politics, or of College, University and Church politics, for that matter, show anything that is hopefully better? 'Student-power' is an important fact today even in India, but why do we not see it generally exerted on behalf of the oppressed and down-trodden, against the corrupt and the inefficient? Surely, if students can take to the streets for weeks on the question of the Expo-delegation, or the discourtesy of bus conductors to some fellow-students, without worrying about studies or examinations, how exciting it would be if they did as much, e.g., on behalf of slum-dwellers, against black marketeers, against political defectors? Is it possible to begin a new style of organisation and to give new, socially relevant objectives to student power?

(2) Students and youth often deplore that everybody today is concerned only about himself, his own security and status and wealth. But it looks as though they themselves expect the country and the State to create a comfortable world for them to enter in. How many young people are prepared to make the opportunity for service, rather than status and money, the criterion for choosing their life vocation? In this country when so many demand so many things from the so little that is available for going round, can we begin to accept the gospel of hard work, learn to defer or, at least correlate, our expectations with some reference to what the vast majority of our people can have, to be patient for ourselves but very impatient for the sake of others? A striking and recent example of the criminally unrealistic demand of the privileged is the case of the Indian Airline pilots. This is duplicated every time teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers, and even theological graduates, are dissatisfied with the opportunities and prospects that this poor country can offer and decide to disown and abandon her, or try to build around them their private world whose standards are those of the affluent West. I realise that this is no simple problem, I am questioning whether the assumption behind this shows enough responsibility to the context of life in this country. How can we ensure that all the talk about revolution and social justice, so common at conferences and assemblies of the present kind, is a serious matter of faith and not a passing fashion? Is it not by accepting its implications for the styles and structures of life in *our* homes, *our* Churches and *our* Christian institutions? Will our concern for the poor or for a just social order be convincing, and will it achieve anything, until we are, each one, personally committed to it to the point of being willing to break with the current notions of success, comfort and security which are concerned only with 'I, me and mine'?

(3) Caste, creed, region, language have become increasingly divisive and oppressive forces in the life of our country. Most people who have gone to school or college have had the opportunity of knowing the worth of individuals among their class-mates without reference to any of these factors. Students are thus best equipped to create and further in our country a new understanding of man as man, to create a new national consciousness that transcends these barriers. As we know to our shame, Christians and churches are by no means exempt from this denial of the equality of men. I believe young people can, and must, set the pace to break this down. This must begin in the intimate circle of their homes and reach outwards to the larger society. This must begin with such intimate things

as the choice of one's friends, of one's life-partner, of our principals, presbyters and bishops. It must begin to show itself in such things as the treatment of our domestic and other servants.

(4) Our churches are paternalistic, status-conscious, security oriented. They are among the great champions of the *status quo*. Though our institutions have done great and remarkable service in their day, they tend to exist and work as vested interests today. They also give the church an appearance of power and strength that she is not entitled to in her own right as an Indian Church. Only young people can force her to become the Church for the poor by forcing her to expose herself and to respond to the revolutions of our time.

Fellow-labourers with the living Christ :

I realise that I have not made enough revolutionary proposals. This is partly because my approach has been guided by the conviction that no intelligent and sensitive person today can be blind to the hundred and one inhuman

and unjust things around us that desperately call for radical change in every area of the life of our society and country. Where there is *not* enough conviction, and where conviction needs to be built up, is in the matter of seeing these as bearing centrally on the meaning of the Gospel, in the work of Christ, and the calling of Christians in today's world.

Let me make it clear that Christians rushing into the revolution without enough Christian motivation and hope will render no particular service to it. This is because the validity of our concern with revolution rests on the fact and faith that Christ is not only concerned with it, but that he is also active in it, seeking to redeem it, so that it will serve the cause of the new humanity which he revealed and inaugurated in himself. The risen and the living Lord Jesus is our hope *for* and *in* the revolution. Are you, am I, committed enough to Jesus to be with him where he is in the world today? That is the question for us at this assembly if we are serious about taking our full share in the building of a new society and nation in our India.

Revolutionising the Church for its Mission in India Today

PRABHU GUPTARA,* *New Delhi.*

I take it that none of us is interested in the survival of the church. Because if survival is going to mean betrayal of what its Founder and Master wants it to be, as is apparently the case in South Africa and the Soviet Union, then I trust we would rather see the church perish than survive (Rev. 3 : 14-6).

In no other age and time has the necessity for revolutionising the church been so drastic and so obvious. The organised church continues to stagger on in increasing irrelevance to the times we live in.

'Revolution' is a good word. It indicates to my mind a drastic change, penetrating to the level of basic attitudes which must come about, and by implication can come about in a short time.

It would be unrealistic on our part to expect revolution to come from the bishops, presbyters and elders. It is being initiated by and must be initiated by people outside the establishment who have nothing to lose : a group, perhaps, like the one assembled here at the National Christian Youth Assembly.

Now if we would like to change the Church, it is necessary for us to be changed ourselves first. Each one of us needs to be absolutely convinced about what we believe. But that is obviously not enough. We need to have met with the Lord personally and invited Him to take over our lives. He must be real in our own experience. Otherwise we will not be able to demonstrate His reality to others. And nobody, in the church or outside, will listen to us, and rightly so.

We must, in other words, examine ourselves and see if we have experienced the new birth that Jesus talked about in John 3, and are walking with God in humility and full obedience out of love for Him.

Secondly we must know exactly what kind of a revolution we want in the Church, and must be clear about the steps by which this revolution is to be brought about.

The revolution will be brought about as we surrender our lives to the Lord in a radical commitment to Him and help others to do the same. There is a revolutionary

change that comes about in our lives when we unreservedly commit ourselves to the Lord, bringing with it peace, satisfaction, purpose and adventure. As God's power is released in all areas of our life, God uses this, as well as our words, to draw people towards Him. This personal level, as people come to know God themselves, is one dimension in which the revolution is taking place.

The revolution is taking place at another level as our point of view affects the thinking that is going on, through debates, discussions, articles, etc.

Now what kind of revolution do we want ? This has two aspects : reformation in doctrine and revival in life.

Why is the church the highly neutral, or the horrifying and revolting mass of decay and half-truth that it is now? The radical edge of the gospel is lost and New Theology or neo-orthodoxy dominates the scene. These are dead and powerless ; but lame attempts to keep up with the philosophical and other Jones's and trend-setters of this world. We cannot hope to play safe and keep a foot in both God's kingdom and in that of man-in-rebellion-against-that-God. A revolutionary is, of all people, the most exposed, the most likely to be called a fool and a fanatic.

Both New Theology and neo-orthodoxy have a lot to teach us. So have Hinduism, Islam and Communism. But neither of them gives us God's good news. The Bible is the Word of God and we need to understand anew the Biblical system of thought and surrender ourselves anew to the authority of the scriptures. This has, by and large, been given an unpleasant connotation. Few really bother to understand it, and for lack of knowledge our people perish (Hosea 4 : 6).

Reformation in doctrine should lead naturally to revival in life. This revival will mean a revolution in Church structure to begin with. The highly institutionalized parish structure as we have it now is collapsing and is bound to crumble completely. The basic unit should be the family-profession-based cell-group : a small group of up to say eight people living a shared life and meeting regularly for prayer

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and Bible study and for thinking out and practising the relevance of the gospel to social structures as they know and experience them. We must stop accepting money and personnel from abroad and build a truly indigenous and indeed missionary church.

It has been said often and truly that the church exists for service. The Indian Church has long prided itself on its signal tradition of service to our country. Our schools, hospitals, etc., are no doubt rendering some service. But we are fools if we blind ourselves to the fact that they are hot-beds of corruption and convenient places for us to employ members of our own community in. These are in fact marring our witness. We cling to these institutions to salve our consciences with the thought of how much service we, a small community, are rendering to our country. We might render more true service if we turned these institutions over to the government (which has now largely taken over social responsibility for the country anyway) and move further into unreached villages and backward areas, of which there are more than a sufficient number. Another alternative might be to move into new areas of service: unemployment and community reconstruction for example. I would suggest that our finance (including those from abroad and any compensation we might get from the government) be used to set up a system of setting up factories, etc., to be handed over to the workers gradually as they buy up shares

with their pay, bonuses, etc. We can encourage Christian teachers, social service personnel, nurses, etc., to take up jobs with government or other secular agencies. The salt must be in the soup if it is to fulfil its function.

The Church in India is more proletarian and draws its membership from all kinds and classes of men unlike, for example, in the USA where it is basically middle-aged and middle-class. Nevertheless the atmosphere is essentially similar, and is composed of the same bourgeois values and aspirations based on money and the desire for a good reputation. We must stop avoiding Christ's call, to live as simply as possible, and give the maximum of our pay for the evangelization of our country, so that everyone in this beloved land of ours may have a chance to hear the good news before the doors close forever. We must preach against, and demonstrate by our lives, that we are concerned about, corruption, exploitation and centralization. These must not be tolerated.

Brethren, we are choosing today between fire and fire, between voluntarily giving up our security, strength and life, and being forced to give them up; between launching out on the adventure of risking our all for Jesus, and destruction, personal, corporate and national.

Let us indeed rise and build. But not autonomously. For except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that attempt to build it (Ps. 12: 7. 1).

Commissions at the Youth Assembly in Madras

MAISIE CHERIAN, *Madras*

The intentionally good idea to have commissions, whereby successful discussion could materialise, certainly yielded good fruit. After the choice of a theme, the next important venture was to choose seven commissions that were relevant to the theme.

The delegates were given the option to choose their own commissions and the Planning Committee conceded their first preference in most cases. However, in some cases it was left to the discretion of the committee. Each Commission was convened by a delegate. Relevant talks were given on the different subjects by people who were well versed in that particular field. Ample opportunities were given for discussions. On the fourth day the Recommendations of each Commission were submitted at the Plenary Session.

The recommendations were placed before the Assembly. Some amendments were made and the resolutions were passed, often after severe criticism and strong opposition—especially regarding Urban Development the points put forward were found not vitally relevant or the most important problems confronting it. The following were the recommendations and resolutions:

Commission No. 1

Role of Youth in Urban Development

1. The youth should get themselves attuned to the problems of urbanisation and arouse public consciousness of such problems.
2. The youth must form pressure groups to stimulate the social agencies to solve or eradicate such problems.
3. The Youth should co-operate with such social agencies as have already taken up the task of solving the problems.
4. The Church must join like-minded organisations to prevent duplication of work.
5. Since the problems of each city or state differ from

those of others, depending on the situation, youth must study the pertinent problems and find ways and means to uproot these problems.

6. To carry out this effectively the youth of today must identify themselves and establish personal relationship with the under-privileged.

Commission No. 2

Development through Arts and Communication

1. To tap the talents of the youth by instilling the competitive spirit, i.e., by conducting competitions in music, drama, symposiums, essays, story and poetry on National and Regional levels.
2. To have a National Youth Magazine in English—if possible in Regional languages also.
3. To produce audio-visual aids for youth work in the Churches. Though this is in practice the commission recommends that it need not be purely religious but that it should be socially educative and informative.

Commission No. 3

Youth and Politics

1. To make the youth aware of the situation in our country.
2. To form groups of young people who would make a study of their own town, village or vicinity and take up problems, mobilise public opinion and act on these problems.
3. To attempt to create practical awareness in our slums and villages. The Christian youth should consciously create discontent among the masses and urge them to struggle for their rights.
4. To think in terms of forming themselves as a strong extra-parliamentary opposition in collaboration with their

non-christian brethren. They should act as pressure groups. Peaceful demonstration should be resorted to when methods of persuasion have failed. If all peaceful methods fail violence should be used as a last resort.

5. No actions should be undertaken without sufficient analysis and research. Theory and practice should go together.

6. A resolution stating 'we the member of the house express the whole-hearted solidarity for the oppressed people of Bangla Desh' be passed. (Was unanimously passed).

The members of the commission realised that some of the suggestions would sound impractical to some Christian friends. But they believed that if they meant business that would be the least they could do that would have any tangible effect.

Commission No. 4

Development through Service Projects

1. All youth departments should take up EYS projects as an important programme in their schedule of activities.

2. The Assembly expresses the necessity to form a central organization at the national level to organize, promote and co-ordinate youth service projects and camps either depending on the NCC or as an independent body.

3. The Assembly expresses the necessity for Regional training courses for work camp leaders.

4. Opportunities through CASA, NCC, Youth Department of WCC, EACC have not been made use of to the maximum in our country. The youth leaders should therefore tap such resources and utilize them for the benefit of the youth and community of India.

5. The sponsors of the EYS projects should try to secure close co-operation and participation of all the Christian Churches and organisations in that area and there should be joint effort in the ecumenical sense.

6. Equal opportunities should be given to all Christian denominations and organisations to participate in the camp and nobody should be kept out on the basis of caste or religion provided they are prepared to accept and follow the programme of the camp.

7. EYS projects should give training to the youth in handicrafts and small scale industries which help them to accept it as a profession in their future life and not only for construction work and social service.

Commission No. 5

Progressive youth in the Servant Church

1. Clear evidence should be seen by the Indian Christian leadership recognizing the phenomenal change in our youth today. We request the NCC of India to reconsider its decision to terminate the NCC Youth Department.

2. We welcome the decision of the Madras Diocese of the CSI to reserve for the youth 30% of seats in all its policy-making bodies. We hope other Churches will follow the good example. The youth must be allowed to play a role that is sizable if not equal to that of the adults, in the Church, if it wishes to arrest the process of alienation. The upper age for youth should be 25 years and the lower limit 15 years.

3. Training programmes may be organised to turn out imaginative Christian youth leaders to help the Christian youth to face confidently the challenges thrown to them by the changing society. The leaders should be from the youth and specifically for the youth, thus making the Church less preoccupied inside the place of worship but busy outside at the altar of human need.

4. Christian youth in a multi-faith society must be given regular opportunities—preferably annual—to sit down with enlightened representatives of other faiths to begin and to continue a vigorous and purposive dialogue at a truly youth level in an unprecedented manner. We hope the National Christian Council will initiate steps that will lead to such a dialogue at the youth level sooner rather than later.

Commission No. 6

Role of University in changing India

1. Our Universities must cease functioning as ivory towers surrounded by misery. It is vital that they become aware of the problems around them, that they denounce the worst examples of internal colonialism and that they help sub-human masses to become a people and prepare this people for total development.

2. The Universities must prepare, through such changes, citizens who are willing to accept and upgrade the 'New attitudes' and the 'New outlooks' that the present socio-economic order demands. In this, if need be, Christian student bodies such as AICUF and SCM should act as a leaven and even accept 'pressure groups' systems.

3. The Universities as a whole should co-operate and visualise concurrently with the governmental agencies the problem of unemployment, particularly that of the educated unemployed.

Commission No. 7

Role of Youth in Rural Development

1. We, the educated youth who are from the villages or have access to villages, should try to organize like-minded youth to involve themselves in rural development activities in our spare time and do all we can to educate the rural people so that they may be awakened to their need and possibilities of self-help.

2. To forgo a meal a month and or send the cost of a meal a month to the NCC Youth Department towards a housing project in the rural area. Also to get the like-minded people in our own area to strengthen the project.

3. To have a good experience of the problems, each member of the assembly spend at least two days and nights in rural area to study the rural problems.

4. As a practical step to promote rural industries, we urge each member here to purchase cottage industrial products and also to help the villagers to establish small scale industries with the aid of Government.

5. As a small measure to over-come the food problem, we suggest that the families in rural areas may be helped to have small kitchen gardens.

6. We strongly plead for a great joint effort of all the churches at regional and local level, in all the fields—constituted by respective ecumenical bodies—for the purpose of initiation, education, planning, organisation and co-ordination of all developments.

7. In order to take action on these recommendations it is necessary to have region-wise follow-up committees which can have assistance from the NCC and similar organisations.

The discussions gave adequate food for thought. So let us hope that after the lively debates the convictions and impulses that were born of them will not be allowed to sink into 'waste land.' We hope that, that only was the beginning and that the best is yet to be.

Being all Bishops Together*

T. S. GARRETT, *Tirunelveli*

Romans 12: 3-5. In virtue of the gift that God in his grace has given me I say to everyone among you: do not be conceited or think too highly of yourself; but think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each of you. For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another (NEB).

Our Common Humanity

There is a story told of the British King George V that, when there were great celebrations of the silver jubilee of his reign in Britain and elsewhere, he remarked to a friend, 'I don't know why people are making such a fuss of me. After all, I am only an ordinary fellow.' In that remark, perhaps, we see the true Christianity of a king who had the humility, which we all need, to remember that we are 'ordinary fellows'.

In the latter part of the prayer at the laying on of hands in the Consecration Service in which we all participated this morning there is a petition that the newly consecrated bishop may be 'delivered from all assaults of the devil'. It came into the prayer for bishops because a CSI bishop, with whom the preacher was associated in drafting the service in 1956, insisted that it should be included.

I have still to learn whether bishops are more subject to assaults of the devil than other people; but that particular bishop evidently felt it to be a much needed petition, and I hope you will all go on praying that prayer for myself and my wife in the coming years.

One diabolical temptation, though not the only one to which one may be subjected, is the temptation to forget that one is an ordinary fellow.

Our Common Ministry

St. Paul with true perception closely connects this fact that we are all ordinary people, none of us having special exemption from the rules which govern all human life, with the truth that we are members one of another in the body of Christ and that any special function we may perform, or any particular work to which we may be called, is only placed in its right perspective if it is seen as part of the functioning of the whole body with Christ its head. Or to use a different metaphor which is equally emphasised in the New Testament, particular ministries to which individual Christians may be called and ordained are part of the ministry of the whole people of God—'a holy nation, a royal priesthood', Christ being the great High Priest.

The Christian ministry, then, as the New Testament portrays it, is never something that stands apart by itself. It always has a two-fold relation; firstly, in the ministry of Christ himself; secondly, to the ministry of the whole Church. In the consecration service the intention is to give full value to both these aspects of the ministry.

It is significant that the act of ordination begins and ends with the assent of the people and their ascription of praise to God. Also immediately before the ordination prayers the whole congregation sings a hymn praying for the Holy Spirit to act in ordination.

Christ's Ministry and Ours

Turning to the ordination prayers, in the ordination of deacons the stress is naturally on service, which is what the words 'ministry and diaconate' mean, after the pattern of the ministry of Christ, who 'took the form of a servant' and 'did not come to be served but to serve'. We need to remember that, when a deacon is ordained presbyter, he does not cease to be a deacon, His ministry is still *Diakonia*, service. This is equally true of a bishop. For, as Jesus himself said, 'Whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all.'

Nor can the particular service to which the ordained ministry is called ever be separated from the service to which the whole Church is called. As Archbishop William Temple once said, the Church is the only society which exists, not for the benefit of its own members, but for the benefit of others. The present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey, once put the same truth in a different way when he said: 'A church that lives for itself will die by itself.'

This is surely a truth of which every congregation and every diocese in CSI and other churches needs to be reminded. How far, we may well ask ourselves, in our participation in the varying activities of the Church, are we concerned to promote the interests and welfare of our own families and friends and establish their position and influence in the Christian community? Or how far have we really at heart the mission-in-service of ourselves and of the whole Church to the world at large? This is the acid test of all our supposedly Christian piety, the measuring rod by which is shown whether it is truly born of Christian faith or not.

Christ is our great High Priest, but we and all the faithful share in his royal priesthood; and within this priesthood of God's people some are given particular gifts and callings to special ministries.

'Spiritual Worship'

The last paragraph of the ordination prayer begins in both services with a petition that the newly ordained minister, whether presbyter or bishop, may have 'grace . . . to offer with all thy people spiritual sacrifices acceptable to thee.' There is an echo here both of I Peter 2:5 and Romans 12:1.

The sacrifices acceptable to God—our true 'spiritual worship', is not some sacrificial gift, in money or in kind, that we make to God. It is never only our acts of worship in Church, though they are meant to be a vital and significant expression of that spiritual sacrifice. It is rather the offering to God of our whole selves, our whole lives, not in individual-isolation, but 'together with all God's people'. It is never something that the ministry can do on behalf of the laity apart from them. Rather it is a continuous act of life in which we all share in a common responsibility.

We are all 'bishops'

'Responsibility' or 'oversight' is a good translation of the Greek word *episkope*, which may be rendered bishopric

* Sermon preached at his Installation by Bishop Garrett.—Ed.

or 'the work of a bishop'; just as *episkopos*, the word from which 'bishop' is derived, means 'manager' or 'overseer'. However, *episkope* ('oversight', 'responsibility') is by no means a privilege or calling confined in the Church to the bishop alone. Every presbyter, every deacon, every catechist is, we may dare to say, a 'bishop', in that he has a pastoral charge, great or small, a task of oversight in which he is called to exercise initiative and responsibility; not, of course, a dictatorial responsibility in which he takes decisions in isolation from his fellow-workers and from the people he serves, but rather a pastoral charge which he shares with all God's ministers and all God's people.

Failure in initiative

Perhaps one of the factors which tend towards dictatorship at the top is failure of people to perceive their responsibilities and undertake them at other levels. Is it not true that irretrievable opportunities are lost, and souls are carried away in the floodwaters of indifference or sin, simply because people are not prepared to take the initiative and exercise the responsibility which is rightly theirs, but are content to wait passively for orders from above?

Reverence for the past

There are many individuals and congregations who pride themselves on their loyalty to the traditions of the pioneer missionaries who brought the Gospel to them, the traditions of their forefathers for several generations, the traditions in which they themselves were brought up. There is a great deal of good in this, and it has its scriptural warrant in such texts as Jude's appeal 'to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints'. One who serves in Tirunelveli cannot fail to be aware of what he has received from great men and women of God of former generations. As the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses as we run the race that lies before us. And, as our Lord himself said, 'Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours.'

But openness to the future

Yes, the New Testament calls upon us to be true to the heritage we have received; but that is only half the message. Part of our Christian profession is to bring the past to remembrance, or rather into living relationship with the present, as we do supremely every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper and utter the words, 'do this in remembrance of me.' But the other half of the New Testament's message must never be forgotten; it is to open our minds to the future. The words, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' are followed by the declaration that we 'show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

The unfinished task

Have you ever noticed what a deliberately unfinished book the New Testament is? Unfinished, not because the New Testament writers were careless about finishing off the books or letters they wrote or had not time to finish them, but surely because the Holy Spirit who inspired them intended those books to have an unfinished character.

Matthew ends his Gospel with the command and promise

of the risen Christ, 'Go, make disciples of all nations', and 'Lo, I am with you to the end of the age.' In the epilogue to St. Mark's Gospel we have the similar command to 'go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.' Here is a vista which, even in the greatest era ever of evangelistic expansion, still lies open-ended.

This leads me to my final thought: if we today are to be true to Christ and to the record of his person and work which we have in the New Testament, we too must recognise that we have not yet attained the goal, but are still only on the way. We must not be content with what is already established, but must be open towards the future. Our task remains unfinished.

Heirs of a great tradition

As we have said before, we are the heirs of a great tradition. My wife and I are very conscious today that we, in the particular ministry to which we have now been called, are the far from adequate successors of a great line of bishops of this diocese. And as the Church most certainly does not exist by or depend on its bishops alone, we must acknowledge too our indebtedness to the devoted service of others, both small and great, known and unknown.

That is one aspect of our life and fellowship in the diocese and in the Church at large. But we shall none of us be true to the saints and heroes of the past if our well-established heritage causes us to forget the other aspect, i.e., that the Church is and, as far as we can foresee, will be a precarious task force of the army of Christ in an often indifferent and sometimes hostile world, called not to remain where it is, but to penetrate new territory and to cross new frontiers.

A 'Missionary' Church?

This is a question which has been asked a thousand times before, most recently at an ecumenical conference on the role of missionaries in Asia held at Kuala Lumpur. The answer widely given is that individual missionaries have their own particular gifts which may vary widely. The opportunities given them for service too, cover a very wide range of variation. The calling they all have in common, however, is to cross frontiers, to break new ground. If they are merely content to preserve established traditions, to keep things going as they always have been, they have ceased to be missionaries in the proper sense of the word. And as the missionary can never be considered apart from the Church in which he serves, any Church which is concerned merely to preserve its own traditions has ceased to be a missionary Church. Has it ceased, we may well ask, to be really a church at all?

Think new thoughts

Certainly the great missionaries of the past, whose names we revere here in Tirunelveli, were far from being content to keep the establishment intact. The greatest of them were revolutionaries in their time. What we now respect as old and long-established was in their generation something startlingly new.

Let us then—not I or other missionaries alone, but all of us together as a missionary Church—have new ideas, try new experiments, make new efforts, inaugurate new movements. For this is the call to us of Him who has said, 'Behold I make all things new.'

Indian Christian Theology

THE REV. Y. SELVAMONY, *Arasaradi, Madurai.*

The Place of Pre-understanding

The Church in India has received the faith in the form it was delivered by the saints from outside, and the theologies they delivered are the interpretations they gave to the Christ-event as recorded in the Gospels. The Gospels differ from one another according to the understanding and experience of the Evangelists of the Christ-event. Further, a careful study of the New Testament clearly shows that the theological formulations of the event have taken different lines, depending upon the pre-understanding of those to whom they were written. Scholars have separated at least 'three distinct strands of Christological formula in the New Testament, corresponding to the apprehension of Christ by the Palestinian Jewish Christians, the Greek-speaking non-Jewish Christians of the Diaspora, and the Hellenistic Christians.'¹ It is evident that the writers have drawn freely from the pre-understanding of the readers and have employed categories with which their readers were familiar.

Since the New Testament times, the Church Fathers employed the categories of the Hellenistic thought to understand and to communicate the Christ-event. Thus the theologies we have inherited are interpretations of the Gospel made to suit particular situations, using the pre-understandings of those particular contexts.

The Role of the Indian Church

Now, what is the role of the Church in India? We have to take into account our history seriously in this regard. The Church in India is set in a unique context. India is unique in being the home of ancient and highly developed religions. We must admit that the proclamation of the Gospel in India was made in an attitude of polemic towards these religions, especially towards Hinduism. Though the Indian Scriptures were studied, the purpose was mostly attack on them. All these meant that the pre-understanding of India was not brought under the service of the Gospel. So much so, the response to the Christian faith was limited and immature. The indigenous inner pattern, and the new Faith received in a strange garb, have existed side by side unassimilated and no wonder, more often than not, it is the former and not the latter that reigns supreme.

In this situation what is the role of the Indian Church? Is it justified in maintaining the status quo, remaining in this immature stage, passively receiving the traditional presentation of our faith? Are we not expected to rationally understand our faith by thinking through the relation of the faith to the pre-understanding of our culture?

Moreover, maturity means not only the growth of our understanding of the Faith, but it also means the communication of the Gospel to those around us. Understanding our role in these terms is of primary importance, both for increasing our faith and for witnessing to it because these two are inseparable. It is not our task merely to receive the traditional faith and to pass it on as it is, only translating it into Indian languages; rather, it is our primary task to interpret the Jesus-event through the pre-understanding of India, which is universally acclaimed as rich and plentiful. It is these categories which are familiar and intelligible to the Hindu. The task is more than a translation of the substance of traditional concepts and propositions; it is a creative act of mediating the Christ-event to the world of culture, society and religion. If the Gospel is not com-

municated to those outside the Church in a way intelligible to them, those who accept the Gospel as well as those who reject it will do so without understanding what they accept or reject. Only in this sense can theology be said to be dynamic. A living theology is contextual in the sense that it should be formed out of the meeting of the living Church and its world, says the findings of the Kandy meeting of the EACC. A living theology can be evolved only when the Church seeks to speak to the many questions asked, in the midst of the dilemmas in India, and when it attempts to speak in relation to the answers to these questions, given by the non-Christian religions, both from their classical and their resurgent forms. This way God speaks to us through our cultural context, and new depths of truth of the Christ-event would be revealed through it. 'Christian theology will fulfil its task in Asia only as the Asian Churches, as servants of God's Word and revelation in Jesus Christ, speak to the Asian situation and form involvement in it.'² A deeper understanding of God and His Word is possible through confrontation with any non-Christian culture because the Holy Spirit is already engaged in dialogue with every culture, in a special way, even before the Christian meets and witnesses to that culture.

Some Fears

When the theologian makes use of the pre-understanding in the Indian culture for interpreting the Gospel it is feared that such close association would lead to syncretism. We must admit that this fear is very legitimate and that such things have happened. But while acknowledging the fact that Christian theology could suffer from syncretism, we must also admit that it would suffer even more by the protectionist policy of the Church. In the past the Church was inhibited by this fear and was bound by the traditional theology which is extraneous and in some cases obsolete. As a result, the Indian Christian mind has remained sterile. 'The fear of the heretics made the Church follow the course condemned in the Parable of the Talents, where one of the servants carefully wrapped up the coin given to him and did not hazard it in commerce.'³ Moreover, such fear, however legitimate, need not be true if the theologian is true to his personal commitment to his Lord, who, being a historic Person, can never be assimilated by any religion as if he was a series of ideas.

Also, interpreting the Gospel culturally does not mean taking and using words and phrases from other religious systems to express the Christian Faith. Such 'abstraction' of terms from their original sources and introducing them into the Christian structure, as they are, is being unfair to both religions. A creative theology cannot be evolved by such transposition of terms and ideas; rather, whatever is extracted from non-Christian sources must be transformed and made to bear the content which the New Testament puts into it. This is not impossible because words are capable of bearing new meaning when absorbed into religious contexts.

It is true that some attempts at indigenous interpretation have at some points given room for suspecting compromise. But these should not deter us from open-minded pursuit for better understanding, knowing that the history of development of any theology is marked by errors, and that no theological system is, or could be, perfect or beyond error. Full and perfect knowledge shall not be here, but still in

¹ The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance, by M. M. Thomas, page 309.

² *Ibid.*, p. 315. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

the future, when it will be comprehended with all the saints.

India's Unique Role

The theological traditions we have inherited were evolved contextually. Therefore, though they are valuable guides, they cannot be absolute guides, because new situations call for appropriating of new aspects of the truth and meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christ-event is a pearl, perfect and effulgent. Every new facet cut on it will show forth a fresh aspect of its glory.

The Indian Church has come into existence as the fruit of the missionary labours, in God's own good time. Now it is the task of the Indian Church to carve another facet on the pearl of the Christ-event. This is possible only when the Indian Church, through its commitment to witness to her Lord, evolves a new interpretation of the Christ-event in the context of its full involvement with the Indian culture which, as we have already said, is rich, plentiful and unique. The Indian Christian is uniquely fitted to play this role as he inherits the Hindu culture as well as the Christian tradition by virtue of his historical connection with the Western culture. Indian Christians alone can present the majesty of the Gospel event in an idiom intelligible to the Hindu.

Some Salient Features of Indian Christian Theology

An unbiased, deep study of Hinduism and Indian culture will help us in many ways to evolve an Indian Christian Theology. To take a few examples: (a) research into some of the basic theological terms of Hinduism such as *Brahman*, *Sat-cit-ananda*, *antaryamin*, etc., can bring us fresh illumination of corresponding Christian terms; (b) a wholesome understanding of Hinduism and the Hindu culture will show us which aspects of the Christian Faith need a re-emphasis in the Indian context. It is important that, along with the emphasis on the Cross, the fact of Resurrection also should be given greater emphasis than the West has hitherto done; similarly the belief about the Holy Spirit. Chenchiah rightly points out that 'we have exhausted in a

way the meaning of Christ to the individual. But we have to discover the purpose and achievement of our Lord in the redemption of the social order or in His relation to the cosmic revolution⁴'; (c) a contextual approach will also lead us to recover some aspects of the Jesus-event which are not seen in the theology we have inherited from the West. For instance, the West has attempted to present Christ as answering the needs of those who are oppressed by a guilty conscience. But Indian theology must present Him as one who meets the needs of a people yearning for serenity more than sanctity; a people oppressed by belief in the thralldom of Karma and rebirth (transmigration) rather than by an awareness of sin.

Another significant point is the emphasis on *anubhava*, direct experience, as the primary requisite for theological thinking, Christian living and witnessing. Theology should come out of direct experience of Christ—'the raw fact of Christ' as Chenchiah puts it, and not from creeds and dogmas which are interpretations only. Doctrines, dogmas and creeds have not exhausted the plenitude of Christ; they are variable and He only is absolute. Even the Gospels which form our primary source for faith and theology are the fruits of the experience and interpretations of the authors of the Christ-event, and cannot be understood without direct experience of Christ. There are historical and intellectual difficulties in extricating the 'raw fact of Christ' from the credal, confessional and traditional accretions that shroud Him. But an attempt must be made to get as close to the 'raw fact' as possible.

The primacy of *anubhava* is a significant emphasis of Hindu theology and Indian culture as a whole. The dangers of building up any theological structure on personal experience are obvious,—may be theology could come as a result of group thinking. However, the deadliness of any theology which does not give primary importance to experience is much more obvious. It is such direct experience which could safeguard the theologian from compromising. Only such theology will be authentic and convincing to the Indian mind; only such theology will have the dynamism to enable the laity to be obedient in their daily involvement in the secular environment.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Plans for German Ecumenical Congress Announced

Augsburg—Finishing touches are being applied to arrangements for the first large Protestant-Roman Catholic Congress to be held in West Germany. Taking the place of the annual Protestant Kirchentag, this year's Ecumenical Congress will be held here from 3 to 5 June under the joint sponsorship of the Central Committee of German Catholics and the Kirchentag Committee.

Six themes have been set and preparatory documents drawn up on: The need for faith and Churches; Worship; Marriage; Concern for the individual; Service to Minorities: Foreign Workers; and Development: the Christian's Responsibility.

Dr. Kurt Scharf, Bishop of West Berlin, has criticized plans for a closed meeting of invited representatives from Protestant and Catholic Churches immediately before the Congress opens. He expressed the hope that groups going to Augsburg will 'exert such pressure' on the meeting as to make themselves felt despite the planning.

EPS.

Refugee Problem Threatens African Unity, AACC Says

Nairobi, Kenya—The General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) decided last week to send a letter to the heads of African Governments urging them to use their best efforts to end the refugee problem in Africa. The problems posed by the 1½ million refugees, said the AACC, were a threat to African unity, peace and development.

Mr. Misaeri Kauma, AACC Refugee Secretary, reported that while the number of refugees is growing, funds for their support were falling alarmingly. The 96 member Churches of the AACC, which have been giving considerable support to refugees with the help of Churches in Europe and North America, are now searching for money to finance their programmes. Some have run into debt on the refugees' behalf.

Commenting on last week's report, Archbishop Moses Scott, an AACC president, said: 'Christians are doing their best as good Samaritans, but how can we arrest the whole situation? We need to work with governments to attack the situations that create refugees.'

EPS.



Cold Comfort Farm Sold by Rhodesians

Salisbury, Rhodesia—Cold Comfort Farm, the multi-racial Co-operative society assisted by the World Council of Churches, was sold here on 2 April. The Rhodesian Government had seized the farm and declared the society an 'unlawful organisation' because of its alleged support for Rhodesian liberation movements.

EPS.

Two British Churches Unite

London—The Presbyterian and Congregational Church Assemblies this week voted for the Union of the two Churches. It will be the first major Church Union in Great Britain since the Reformation.

EPS.

WCC Provides Assistance to East Pakistan Refugees

Geneva—The Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches has cabled us \$ 37,000 for immediate emergency assistance for East Pakistan Refugees crossing into India, it was announced here last week. In addition the East Asia Christian Conference has sent us \$ 500 as an expression of the concern of the Churches in Asia. The money will be used by the Indian Churches' relief and development agency CASA.

EPS.

CEC Assembly Calls Churches to Political Social Engagement

Nyborg, Denmark—Greater co-operation among Churches in Eastern and Western Europe, securing an enduring peace for Europe and the Political and Social involvement this entails for the Churches were major emphases of the recent Sixth Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC).

The theme, 'Servants of God, Servants of Men,' was discussed in five sections by some 380 participants from more than 100 European Churches. Albania alone was unrepresented.

In the Keynote address Bishop Werner Krusche of Magdeburg, East Germany, said it was not possible for the Churches to separate spiritual from social respon-

sibility. 'In technologically based societies love of the neighbour can no longer be practised if we do not share responsibility for the social forces and structures which decisively

affect his life and....do not help to influence and refashion those forces and structures,' he said. In addition to charitable service there is need for 'social and political diakonia'.

The Structures which most closely correspond to the kingdom of God, he said, are 'those in which partnership can be a reality and where authority and power are used not to freeze entrenched positions but rather to continue development in the service of man and to provide a maximum of justice and spiritual freedom'.

A message addressed to the member churches of CEC called on them not to escape to some private domain but to commit themselves and not stand aside when faced with concrete human needs and practical proposal for dealing with them.

On peace in Europe, the message said it is the Churches' duty to 'promote all plans which give hope for better international relations in Europe such as bilateral agreements for peace or the proposal to convene a Conference on European security in which all states can participate with equal rights and responsibilities.'

EPS.

Church of North India Invites Wider Union

Jullundur City, India—The first Synod of the Church of North India sent a message to Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran Churches inviting them to participate in the new Church to help realize that wider union that Christ wills for His Church.

EPS.

Blake Greets Oslo Diocese on 900th Anniversary

Oslo—Churches and theologians have not dealt adequately with the ideas and concepts of Darwin, Marx and Freud. Nor have Christian moral insights kept pace with the social problems created by exploding population and increased urbanization, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, will state here tomorrow (May 21) at ceremonies marking the 900th anniversary of the Diocese of Oslo.

In greeting the bishops, priests and

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people of the diocese, Dr. Blake promises the Council's assistance in helping the diocese to make its full contribution to the life and faith of the men and women of Oslo. At the same time he said the World Council needed the participation of the Oslo Diocese and others in the Church of Norway to fulfil its function.

Noting that two world wars and the advent of nuclear weapons have made clearly inadequate the nationalistic and culturally bound and limited churches, Dr. Blake expresses the hope that the ancient heritage of the Norwegian Church was 'but prelude to new and renewed faith, hope and love stimulated by the fellowship of the 900th anniversary celebration'.

EPS.

Asian, African Lutherans hit Western Influence in Mission

Tokyo—Representatives of Lutheran Churches in Asia and Africa challenged the churches of Europe and North America to separate Christian mission from Western and therefore foreign thought forms when transmitting Christianity to the Third World. They also called for a world-wide investigation of the consequences for mission arising out of the encounter with socialism, especially Maoist socialism.

These two requests were voiced during a consultation sponsored by the Department of Church cooperation of the Lutheran World Federation which drew 150 participants from 32 countries with Africans and Asians in the majority. Theme of the meeting was 'Lutheranism in the Ecumenical Age'.

During the consultation it became evident that the older churches can learn from the younger ones in Africa and Asia how the Christian faith can assert itself among non-Christians. A growing self-consciousness was evident among the Third World churches,

EPS.

W.S.C.F. Asia Group Acts on East Pakistan, Vietnam

Hong Kong—Human suffering and loss of life in East Pakistan, particularly in the University community, drew expressions of deep regret from the Asia Committee of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) which held its third annual meeting here last month.

A resolution passed by the Committee urged members of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in East and West Pakistan and India to find ways of getting at the 'true problems and facts concerning the political situation in the sub-continent as a whole, so that peace and reconciliation may be established'.

After hearing reports from consultations of agricultural students and of medical students, the committee endorsed a proposal that medical and para-medical students continue exploring how professional skills acquired in university can be brought to bear on development problems in their countries.

EPS.

Asia Christian Service Starts Self-Help Projects in Laos

Vientiane—An improved livestock breeding project and a village school conducted by the Evangelical Church of Laos have been added to the list of programmes aided by Asian Christian service in Laos for which the World Council of Churches is seeking funds. ACS, an agency of the East Asia Christian Conference, has been working in Laos since 1969, primarily giving emergency medical assistance and relief to refugees.

A poultry farming co-operative is one of the self-help projects undertaken by ACS to supplement refugees' income. Eventually it may produce enough eggs to make imports from Thailand unnecessary. The Farmers' Training Centre in Savannakhet Province pioneered the training of 37 young farmers in raising field and feed crops, vegetables, pigs and chicken.

EPS.

NOTICES

WANTED

Applications are invited for General Nursing Course from unmarried girls of good educational background—Pre-University or Higher Secondary Part II given preference—minimum qualifications, Matriculation 2nd Division, minimum age 17 years in September 1971. Cost of prospectus containing application form and other details Rs. 2.50. Also send 0.35 np. stamped envelope to: The Nursing Superintendent, Christian Medical College and Brown Memorial Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab'.

WANTED

A Qualified Accountant with experience of 5 to 10 years of working in the accounts office either of a Church or the Government. Candidates may please apply to the General Secretary, National Christian Council of India, Nagpur-1, giving full particulars of their qualifications and experience and starting salary acceptable.

WANTED

A young Assistant Presbyterian to work in the Team Ministry of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore. Must be a Theological Graduate. Apply immediately to: The Presbyterian-in-Charge, St. Mark's Cathedral, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore-1 (Mysore State).

MATRON REQUIRED

We are looking for a retired teacher or someone with good understanding of children to be a house-mother to about 30 girls and a few small boys in the Girls' Home of the BIRDSNEST ORPHANAGE, MADURAI.

Emolument: Rs. 125 with free room & board at Rs. 25 per month.

Applications to the Secretary: Sister Celia, Anthiya Solai, 22, Grace Kennett Road, Madurai-10, Tamil Nadu.

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